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booster and blaster

the montreal
free poet

THE MONTREAL FREE POET, BOOSTER & BLASTER

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ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

During the Forties, Fifties and Sixties, poets in Montreal were in the habit of getting together, reading each other's work, criticizing it frankly, even ruthlessly, and publishing it in local mags. A sense of community survived until the early Sixties. What happened after that cannot be easily summed up. Some poets left town, or stopped writing, vanished up intellectual towers, got immured in jobs, hid under the bed, got scared into ad agencies, contracted white-lung from too much black-board chalk, became immolated in theses, or just went plain bonkers. The sense of community was lost. Poets worked either in total isolation, or incestuously in cliques, not caring much about the world outside.

A number of poets have told me that they are fed up with this situation: that they are willing to trade in the pains of isolation for the hell (as genial Jean-Paul puts it) of other people. I believe that this magazine with its hospitable editorial policy will help bring about this joyous state of affairs, to the

great benefit of Montreal poets and poetry, not to mention the suffering poetic Public. How will this work? How will this magazine attempt to knit our fragmented community together?

To begin with, poets of all tendencies will be made VISIBLE to each other and to the general public. Our magazine is uniquely (some would say insanely) open. Cooperatively run by the participants, it has no editor in the sense of someone who rejects material on grounds of quality. It's FREE in every sense except the financial one. A poet publishes his work, or opinions on any subject he likes, because he thinks they should be published--and is prepared to pay his share of the costs (\$2.00 per page) and do his share of the work involved. Of course, he will get his share of the earnings and may even end up with ten cents profit.

Does this mean that the BOOSTER & BLASTER is a cooperative Vanity Press? If it is, the genre is new. A participant has the right to criticize the work of any other contributor, in the SAME issue of the magazine, in any way he pleases. He may simply label a poem a CROCK OF SHIT and let it go at that, or write a mandarin thesis--if he pleases. By the same token a criticized poet has the right to reply. To illustrate this, I suggest you look over pages 69 and 70. On

page 69, I give a schoolmasterly grading of the entire issue, and flunk about half the poems. On page 70, Nancy Stegmayer rams a shaft up my method and conclusions. This sort of thing is what we have in place of the editorial Cop. If you want to say your piece, you may. But anyone has the right to tell you you're full of shit.

The BOOSTER & BLASTER resembles a gallery where poets may show their work and comment freely on work exhibited. This policy demands poets who are prepared to risk scathing criticism; who have the nerve to confront poets they may have roasted the day before; and who are prepared to rub shoulders with the poetic hoi polloi.

The BOOSTER & BLASTER is an invitation to Montreal poets to come out INTO THE OPEN and make some sort of public stand. Twenty-five poets have done so in this issue. If you are a poet, and would like to participate I suggest you give me a phone call. DEADLINE for Issue 2 is January 20--for March 1972 publication. The magazine is printed offset by one of the poets, Trevor Goodger-Hill, and your copy will be reproduced as typed. He assures me the typographical quality will improve. Standard 8½" x 11" paper should be used, black on white, no greys. I suggest you clean the keys of your typewriter, use a new ribbon and

centre the copy. Large black type comes out best. A cheque, payable to The Montreal Free Poet, Booster & Blaster, should be enclosed: rate, \$2.00 per page.

What about the title, THE MONTREAL FREE POET, BOOSTER & BLASTER? The word 'FREE' is intended to suggest affiliation with the underground press tradition of frank expression. A stylistically mandarin contributor may be as mandarin as he wishes, but if he wants a protected chamber, this mag is not for him. The same remark applies in reverse. Wild boys scared of mandarins need not apply.

You don't have to be Edmund Wilson to know that much underground prose is garbage. My hunch, however, is that a prose with great emotive punch is being forged in those rough and ready pages. My hope is that the same thing will develop in poetry. The words BOOSTER & BLASTER in the title are intended to suggest that energetic, even vulgar expression is permitted. The aim is to encourage people to come out with what they REALLY think and feel.

To get back to the suffering Reader who either does not write, or if he does prefers not to publish: this magazine offers a fair sampling, good and bad, of what is being written by poets in Montreal today. It will also provide a means of expression for the reader's

views on the poetry. Walt Whitman said that great poets are created by great audiences. I believe that much poetry today suffers from the lack of a sense of audience. If you are a reader, your letters on the policy of this magazine, and its content, are invited.

It remains only to thank the 25 poets who contributed poems, cash, comments, and labour; and others who helped to produce this issue--Carl and Linda Katz, Marie Bornstein, Raymond Gordy and Hilary Dickinson.

Bryan McCarthy,

Montreal, December 1971.

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poems by



ACQUAINTANCE

Avi Boxer

**FAMILIAL
ROULETTE**

I am up for assassination.
Bodyguards see me to the washroom.
I pose with my wife and children
on the chesterfield.
My daughter goes underground.
My son wants to be a poet.
My wife denounces my infidelities,
in a balcony speech,
to the masses.

I give myself up.
I demand a public trial
open to the world press.
I go on a 90-day fast.
On the day of my trial
I stagger into the fixed court
to face my angry tormentors.
My twisted skeletal body
wings gasps of disbelief
and cries of "shame! shame!"
A million flashbulbs
straighten, tan my limbs.
I raise my arms for silence.
I am my own lawyer.
My last word
(before they pronounce
the death sentence)
saves me.
The masses storm the court —
I am lifted over their heads
and carried to the square.
I pose on my white horse
as saviour of the city.

They don't make history
like they used to:

I refuse to enlarge the strip
for my daughter's hijacked planes.
Tell the Seventh Fleet
I can't guarantee
the safety of anyone,
especially Americans.
Tell my daughter
selective assassination
is no way to do business.
She can shoot
the kidnapped dignitaries.
I will give them pompous funerals.
History will absolve me.

I think it was me who said
love is the metaphysical art
of holding by letting go -- or
surely I've earned bigger
and better detractors than you.
And so on. All I ever wanted was
cowboy pyjamas and a fast draw.
Instead I got Pound for Finance Minister,
Guevara for House Physician.
I can no longer be bothered
with the upkeep of my charisma.
I shall expose myself
on the Ideas of March.
I will give up power.
I will retreat to a monastery.

Who is leading students against me?
Who is toppling my statue in the square?
My son? Why, the colic bastard!
I'll invoke the War Measures Act!
Ah, a note! What?
He threatens to burn the library?
The one they named after me?
I will not hand over my memoirs!
Damn the poet. This is my Republic!
After filial editing

I appear as a depraved dictator.
The masses turn against me.
I go into hiding.

On Father's Day
I accept my son's offer
of safe conduct to his dinner table.
Having no respect for food
he raises a dirty pistol to my head.
His wife, a sensitive cook, stabs him.
Apprehending my son's assassin
I am shot by a telescopic rifle
fired by my shortsighted daughter.
I am buried in an unmarked grave
by my wife who hates hero worship.
My son and I are absolved by his widow
in the Exclusive to Life and Time:
"His son was given to political science,
drugs, and sexual malpractice . . .
the autopsy revealed a brain tumour."

My statue in the square is restored.
My penniless wife goes insane
selling my poster-portrait
to yearning ladies.
The students publish a little book
of my sayings.
The Republic opens a gambling casino
in my name.
I, Avi Boxer, am finally
resolved.

AVI
BOXER

TWO
POETS
IN
MEXICO

We knew it took two
to drink Tequila under sombreros,
rouse sequined mermaids from the Gulf
with lonesome harmonicas,
wrestle them for their virginity
as the astonished sun reclined
into the embarrassed sea.

We knew it took bravado
to swagger bronzed and naked
into the blazing shingles,
address the constellations, read poems
to bewildered schools of fishes
palette-coloured and dabbling
between the bays of our toes
for passports to Parnassus.

But, hell, we were ingenious gods,
scattering promises like birdseed,
refusing to read newspapers
or wind clocks -- because
we had a vision of ourselves,
too evil to be false
too good to be true.

Ciudad Madero, Mexico, 1952
Avi Boxer

NOUMENAL
LOVE

We met like pros
parried without clichés,
drew blood quickly, honestly
again, and again
with just the right amount
of Kantian grace,
noumenal pain.

We nicked each other's face,
wiped clean each other's foil,
returned it with a kiss
to each other's velvet case.

We met like pros
on that hard neutral bed,
transcended all our senses
again, and again
with just the right amount
of Kantian grace,
and noumenal pain.

Paris, 1969 Avi Boxer

**HAIKU
DEAD**

Why do you follow
God's twilight footprints, drifting
over the tree-line?

Sky and sea still meet
where God slashed open His throat
for your first bloodbath

**HAIKU
TRIAD**

Like an orange bow
the butterfly comes to rest
on your long black braid.

Crickets tune their legs
as the bullrush and fall leaf
glide past your canoe.

Condensing in frost
your face shakes my windowpane.
I unkiss your tears

— Avi Boxer

We wan changes

but

(A RELAND) butrfli gathrs LES

on trubl'd

Bub's

MUCH LES

a PRES EV

"We wan changes,

Wav

but

Phil DesJardins

We preserve kitchen recipes?

The 'magic realism' of roadsigns
that shine in the dark...

Having lunch with Hyman I suddenly realized
"Christ! I was supposed to be having lunch with someone!"
But it was Hyman. I am having lunch with Hyman.
Relief, ah, relief.

The real and the transcendental are one.

The one laid on the other
As you said, "A prolonged total body orgasm" (for two)

All writing, a metaphor for someone talking
Where? When?

As in Bernard Shaw, the metaphor of social chit-chat
laid over what he says

The real as metaphor for the 'eternal'
(tho the real seems never good enough)
This world is heaven
to all the fictions of art.
And it exists!

So poetry is news the god comes through

And how can it be poetry if it is vulgar, not courtly

"Poetry is courtly words, Suniti!"

詩士

As for reality
there's as much maya within as there is without.

But why so human? why so weakly human?

[Prophet Layton
thinks he's a great 'un--
but he's only a little
late 'un]

Man: Your nickelodeon's clogged
Unscrew the stops...

"A new way of looking at things--"

That's the view that the universe is not good enough
They want a writer to give them a new universe.

Louis Dudek

DANSE RUSSE TO THE VIOLIN

(for Louis Dudek)

My friend living alone flourishes
tacked or held with scotch tape yards aloft
on the walls of his rooms & hallways
paper music for the violin

Here he has Brahms in the bathroom
Mozart above the landing
on the turn of stairs

Mozart & Brahms!
The happy genius of his house fails big
scraping & bowing alone
in an ecstasy of quiet squalls

You can imagine a tall man rising
& from day till stretching
to embrace with innocent spirit the violin

or naked in deep night
strolling sawing,
perhaps even by moonlight
reading his pin-up masters

wrongly.
Wm Carlos Wms
probably couldn't dance well

...IN A CHURCH AISLE
OF HEART FAILURE

The sole time that I am at divine service this season
Ray Hand the large ■ (likely) ever-present usher
invites me among the mysteries not inquiring
where in hell were you those other sundays

Three pastors are on parade for some special occasion
in these matters of life & death, our lives & deaths
my own life & death. I read the hymnal
finding two poems only by Milton, none by Donne.

I look for Robert Herrick without much hope
Ushers are marching toward us up the aisle
after collecting the money. Here comes Hand
a cathedral larger than death

He tumbles backward, snatching blind at pews
where he has often ushered others safely.
I close & lose the hymnal. Pastors quit talking
Many Elders who are also oddly medical doctors

(ethically able so to advertise) arise
pious soft-shoes & now come full-out running
They can do nothing either for good Ray Hand
in his own special alone only occasion

RAYMOND FRASER

SURVIVAL KIT INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) You can only live in this world with your mind
enough at ease if
- 2) You realize you're born into a rather large madhouse
- 3) And all the things you see are part of a great
struggle
- 4) A perpetual war of the insane
- 5) Where you tuck your head down into your shoulders
and go running
- 6) With all the tricks and cunning moves you possess
or learn
- 7) Across the field zigzagging this way and that
- 8) Laughing wildly as bravely as you can
- 9) It's the biggest it's the real circus madhouse
- 10) Touring towards the climactic splash the final show

ACCORDING TO FREUD ALL DREAMS ARE WISH-FULFILLMENTS

Is it true,
do I, is it true,
do I really want to be shot?
Is it true I want to be knifed?
Does it truly fulfill my wishes
panting and gasping up hills,
timeless treadmills,
pursued, then run to the ground --
such hopes of bloodchilling horror --
snakes crawling up my legs -- is my wish
falling off cliffs to razored rocks below,
drowning a thousand miles out at sea,
strangled and smothered by a random psychopath --
I wake up in terror
breathless in a cold sweat
hearing the soft footstep of a killer in the shadows
ready to spring to slice my stomach open
with a flash of a long sharp knife.
I wish I may. I wish I might
wish for something else tonight.

RAYMOND FRASER

HERMAN ON A WINTER DAY

To get warm and bum a cigaret
Herman went into Marty's novelty shop.
Herman wore a red plaid cap with the earlaps down,
gray knitted mitts on his hands, an old airforce tunic,
overalls, gumboots.
He was bentover, his shoulders humped.
Herman was almost forty.
He went into Marty's, stood inside the door looking wide-eyed,
round eyes, his tongue lumped against his cheek,
hand always wavering in front of his face.
He went up to the counter.
"Moke? Moke?" he asked Marty.
"Give us a whoop, Herman!" said Marty loudly
with a big smile.
"Give a whoop and I'll give you a smoke."
"No..." Herman dragged the word from deep in his throat.
"No smoke, then. Give us a whoop
or you don't get a smoke." The others in the store
watched smiling.
Herman looked around and back at Marty.
"Moke," he demanded, eyes downcast.
"Nope."
"HOH! HO JESUS HO!"
Herman roared loud from deep in his throat.
"HO NO!"
They laughed, the whole store was laughing.
Herman had a wicked glint in his eyes.
"HO JESUS HO HO!"
Marty shaking with amusement gave him a cigaret.
"Light, light," Herman said
with half the cigaret buried in his mouth, cheek bulged
from his tongue.
Marty held the match and Herman puffed hard smacking his lips.
"Let's have another whoop, Herman," a young fellow said
leaning on one of the pinball machines.
Herman turned his wide eyes on him,
looked at the door -- pointed at him.
"HO JESUS! SON A HOO! SON A HOO!"
Then he ran out the door, banging it shut
scuttling like a crab through the snow.

RAYMOND FRASER

THE STARS DECIDE

The secretary was nice to me.
Everytime I went into the office on my business
she smiled and we passed a few words back and forth.
She was no beauty and I wasn't after her bum or anything.
One day she was reading some horoscopes.
"What's yours?" she said.
"What's my what?"
"Your sign."
"Oh. Taurus."
She shook her head. "That's too bad. We could never
become lovers."
"Oh? What's yours?"
I forget what she said, Aquarius or Sagittarius, they're
all the same to me.
"They don't match, eh?"
"It'd never work."
"Well, that's the way it goes," I said.
And that was that.
The next few times I came around she kept her face in
her work --
ignoring me. And then after that she wasn't there.
She'd quit or been fired.
Like the stars at dawn she vanished.

THE WELL HUNG MAN

Before they could hang him
his cock this man flung
round his neck and the cell bars
till he personally strung
what the hangman was after
his neck was well wrung.
"Here's a man," said the hangman
"here's a man who's well hung."

In anticipation of the repeal of the War Measures Act,

Aprill 1971

that patient Aprill then must come
unlike the April of an earlier time

and seize us by the forelock

"must it not?" o captain Prime

"Johannes Southcote, who were you?"

"and who the angels singing out of key?"

who spoke of patient avrill
that must come
uncertain
and unlike
the April of an earlier time
and seize rebellion by the forelock?

Michael Gnarowski

true

in sending these to you

not all form being true

to form
but to feeling

true

and

to sound
reaching through

branches

&

similar space

these force a choice

not all or

always

true

roots & arrangements & a recent decision

are not all

true
to form

becoming always a necessary choice
of

true

Michael Gnarowski

②

①

Pretty-Boy-Freud came riding
 like a sexual
 vaquero on a stick,
 and in th place of sickness
 left
 a thousand dollar bill.

and all his horse said was clickety-clop
 and all that he said was Beep
 Beep Beep.

Came riding thru the vacuum of silence
 and read sound poems to the sick in
 university couch rooms and left
 riding his dadde coloured horse
 much like an organized
 electric broomstick, Beep
 bewitched 'em.
 Twixt ear and ear
 left them with
 a silly grin and rode away
 mumbling Billy th Kid
 th delicate ryme
 balanced between chin
 and chin, and when th clapping died down
 the legend left riding on his
 pretty-boy-freud-sound-couch
 that was wired with sound
 and at regular intervals omitted a

Beep

Beep Beep Beep
 Beep Beep. (and mesmerized
 their sound vocabulary/and hypnotized
 their concrete eyes).da-

dada da-
 dada.

Keep th Freud, Beep,
 deep in dada, da-
 da dada
 dada. BeepBeep!!

Added 1/68

Who said
jews could never look
into the sun ? I crave

that heat that dazzling
every hour,
for my white skin
cannot live in caves, this
for white
salamanders
with white veins/in pools
light never reaches.

The moon's poetry
does so little to me
I do not find a subtlety
in silver allegro. It is
the golden notes we are
denied of make me shiver as if
I were tied on my back
for many hours

 to a glacier
that were a sawmill
in its deadliness.
Oh Jesus

 to race about the world
evading seasons/to give up
my junkie form/to live
more subtley
as isomorph.
Oh Jesus
how hot the sun has gotten
even in an hour! Perhaps
what I really wanted was not the sun
but some metaphor
for yellow
imbued on a white moon.

ONE BODY, AGING

One body
have I to give myself.
Though it erodes with the slow grace
of mountains, its life
is as the purl of downward falling streams.
What relevance these images of nature
to topography where buildings mass in heaps
and I
Flesh in a corrosive atmosphere
am crushed beneath eternal machinations.
Carion merchants pick my bones.
In dreams I sally forth
to breathe the future. Ideas are young,
ecstasy is in my blood:
yet action in the man-made world
is more severe, and aging is corrupt.
Peace in the hills has come to me most horribly.

HUMILIATION

The surface of his desk is hard,
reflects my face. Can he divine
how scared I am? "Sit
down" he bids, as if to set
his crouching form on high.
The leather seat has rigid
lines and angles like a fence.
My fingernails pock-mark my palms.

"It is a trivial matter" he
begins: the neighbours peek from
window shades. "No reflection
on your work." His desk grins back.
Where is my courage to declare
him meaningless, my hatred for all jobs
when I must make, or sell, or fix
out of necessity? Silent, for hope
of later work, I join the queue outside.

-- Trevor Goodger-Hill

NO FURTHER GENERATIONS

No longer is the brightness
of the early morning mist
beautiful in its translucence
and that duck which should be
raucously streaking south
has an unnatural quaver
in its voice, bewildered call
and I who recently grew
into great love and spawned
new life, brought forth a son
observe lead oxide in the
moistened air, invisible as hope,
and ddt mutation of the mallard's
wing, its rudder broken. I try
to make regard dispassionate
but feel a kind of sickness
in the stomach. Son,
hold my hand a little longer
reassure me: we have so little
time left. Unlike
others' years when men were full
and wrote to give succession
to their thoughts, this poem
is but a bleat, a signal
of distress, for there will be
no further generations, child.
And poisoned you will be
before sixteen and dead
like air and bird and grass, my son.

-- Trevor Goudger-Hill

OUT OF SQUARE BOXES WHAT COMES?

Out of squair boxes, symbolic burrows, we come
each day
but not to yawn and s-t-r-e-t-c-h
inhale, exhale, expand
the muscles
of the lungs and sniff the wind
expectant.

Eyes open to a sky of sunlight
all day long, but not for us
or K. In their own backyards
animals are gods
each morning assume the throne of being.

But no
we people vent from structures strung
like chromosomes
emerge, affluent, yet
in panic need of time. We are
the bought sumpstress
whose peacework's* threatened by her lack
of thread.
See our neighbour trussed
immaculate in shirt and tie and suit
pack himself
in no seconds flat
into that tin projectile**
and
hurdle towards a day again he cannot anticipate.

...and from our dim ancestry
before codification
in a guilt book, will you take the understanding
of species' survival
'tolerate your neighbour as youreself'
and twist it
into a plea for mutual aid
an assault
on the castle of your programmed haste? Or will you
my human compatriots
currow your face in your hands?

-- Trevor Goodger-Hill

* 'Piecework' was a device utilized very early in the development of the capitalist system whereby the wage worker was paid according to the 'pieces' he produced. This system of remuneration soon became widely employed as a sweatshop tool, where the rate paid was set so low workers could survive only by having the two adult mates (and frequently their offspring) enslaved. In its more outrageous form piecework died out in the first half of the 20th century, although the principle of co-relating production/income for workers continued in one form or another, such as bonus or incentive schemes, commission selling and profit-sharing, until the wages system disappeared.

** The 'projectile' appears to refer to a form of individual transportation, probably an automobile, in which people sped themselves to places of enforced work at speeds, incredible as it may seem now, in excess of 50 km/hr. The automobile had a popular life of less than 50 years and disappeared almost overnight during the author's lifetime because of its poisonous nature. Some authorities believe, however, that the projectile refers to a pneumatic system whereby encased people were shot through tubes by vacuum, but this system of transportation, because of its high kill-per-mile ratio, had not been widely adopted before the Great Evolution.



JUDGE AND EXECUTIONER

The logbook of my life holds captive
Between its daily jaundiced sheets
The memory of a thousand loathsome cities
Feeding the gutters of a million streets!

I used to leaf through my black diary
Resurrecting the bipeds I despise
Fencing their lying mouths with black moustaches
Painting enormous spectacles around their vacant eyes.

Not long ago I was the judge
Who sentenced all these memories to death!
Being the executioner as well
I filled my mind with emptiness.

(from 'UNEVER TOUCH A BUTTERFLY')

mario gross-kestrandt

WHEN THE COCK CROWS

The city yawned
And slowly exhaled
The heat of the day
Through skin
Of gray brick
And asphalt.

The city yawned
And I stretched.

The city slept
And I awoke.

I am the palamist
Of dimly-lit streets.

The astrologer
Of Neon stars.

The clairvoyant
Of closed doors
And drawn blinds.

I am the solitary shape
That falls asleep
When the city yawns
And slowly rises
On the hooves
Of the milkman's horse.

(UNDER THE MASK, Les Editions Rouge et Noir 1991)
marco gross-kentrane

FRAGMENTS OF A TRAVELLERS LETTER TO HIS SON.

Dear Unknown One!

My well-worn shoes have chewed the dust of many roads
That led nowhere, except away from where I stood; and I have
followed them with joy-filled-heart.....
.....Occasionally some lonely
tree invited me to share its solitude. I touched its bark,
It covered me with shade.....
.....My eyes have been the mirror of
shy babbling brooks and they have quenched my thirst.....
.....I have
read the diary of the wind printed on the moving sands, on
the scroll of towering waves, on the trembling blades of grass;
and the wind has carried me along.....;
.....I have synchronized the beat of my heart to the
rhythmic chant of parallel wheels devouring the night along
seemingly endless tracks.....
.....I have been lulled to sleep by the earthy, tarry song
of fog-horns playing hide-and-seek behind a shawl of mist.
Join me my song, join me my son and hand in hand we shall leave
the world of man and ride the backs of Dolphins.

(from 'UNDER THE MASK' Les Editions Rouge et Noir 1961)

mario gross-kestranek

Look! Look at the wind dance over her art,
dip-rippling the snow-swirls, not content
with the slightest perfection. Together, then apart,
in cups and cusps, drifts are riffed and rent.

Look! Look at the trees bend. They beckon us regard,
they model their new sleet suits with boughs of grace,
they wrestle with the rearranging wind, retard
her swift-straight course, sprinkle her with flake trace.

Look! Look at the road spit off the white refuse,
for it must eat the soiling oils that seethe,
sniff the car sick scents as they diffuse
to teach the wind to kill, the trees not to breathe.

Linda Jewel

GENTLY CRAZY

Here come the sun specks
auras around dust flecks
floating in relief
to rest on the turning leaf.

How such a bright touch
can be so soft
drives me gently crazy.

A near-forgotten wind wisp
a barely unheld breathy lisp
of carressing sibillants
tumbles grass tittilants.

How such a silent sigh
can ring from ear to ear
drives me gently crazy.

Nothing more than finger mist
on the inside of my wrist
for no more than a moment
and I blossom in a torment.

How such an inclination
can flower such a season
drives me gently crazy.

Linda Jewel

Gertrude Katz

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

Where will I find you
my honey-tangle-haired teen?
Tonight I followed the lake's edge
winding in and out of coves,
Chipmunks rustled a tree -
rain cupped in leaves spilt like bullets,
I cried,

You were on the other side of the lake.
I saw you lift a fish
from the white shore's scum -
saw you kneel on the wharf
(were you trying to revive it?)
- mourning the dead lake
you didn't hear me call
(did you pretend not to hear?)
- you made a pyre,
tenderly built a monument of sticks,

I saw you again on the highway
holding up a sign -
it read "to anywhere".
I sat across a hill
watching like a dach cow chewing her cud,
storing milk,

- Looking for you on city maps
in coffee shops and floppy hats,
on ocean floors and mountain scrag -
talking to the leaves,

- Listening to you on newscasts
supporting Viet Nam draft escapes,
raising money for Biafra refugees
- legalising marijuana,
protesting phosphates in detergents
- for abortions,
against selling cheese in waxed paper
and adding preservatives to cans -
fasting for money to wipe out yaws
everywhere in the world.

You came home, one night,
I heard you in the attic trunk,
found you mending the frayed seams
of an old stuffed rabbit -
bandaging a leg -
repairing an eye
with a button ripped off your shirt.

Where shall I look for you now
my honey-tangle-haired teen?
A mass of pyres burn on the road.
It rained this morning:
leaves are cupped heavy with water.

Six Poems by Kelly Lane

Maytime in Quebec (1968)

Rabble from this vicinity
are peering in at the doorway
this neighborhood crawls with sly whispers
rumors creep in from all sides
days become more ominous, more grim
no stirring hearts of men thru love

Dans La Belle Province

Canada smells blood
proposes commissions
Quebec, in nausea
threatens . . .
and jails her Youth!
(Their votes
were bottles of gas
flung against armouries)

A Soldier's Pain

(for Sgt Maj. Walter Leja)

I am where pain is - everywhere
dazed by the city's thunder
I lie silently . . .
bombs explode in my brain
my right hand disappears in smoke
and blood flows
thru the torn gully of my side
(I dream ■ a world of hate)

FLQ Bomb Blast

Stroke of twelve falls
like a head from a block
plaster crashes to the floor
b-o-m-b-s explode in our hearts
screams claw our mouths apart
Wilfrid O'Neill's
hot Celtic blood
lies caked in Canadian dust
(a stranger, yes
in a world ■ never made
quiet victim now of these terror-days)

Canada to the FLQ

Bug me with bombs!
But remember . . .
they teased Vesuvius
and Pompeii perished

Cleopatra (by Kelly Lane)

A fascinating bitch
Isis -- Goddess ■ Egypt
Disguised herself
In two-feathered crown of gold
Adorned with serpents
(with dark design)
sailed down the Nile
As Cleopatra . . .
O Queen ■ the blue waters!
Every Mike, Dick and Eddie
(and even Joe) of history
longs for your loins
longs to be locked
in the prison of your flesh
Chain me to your throat O Queen!
Release the crimson bird
From his cage ■ bone
Let my giant mouth (a boat)
Run aground on your KISS

Notes From a Travel Diary

four poems by

Carol H. Leckner

Venice

Creaking barges
and stenching canals,
glass-blowing houses
near piazzas overrun
with gawking pigeons
and hissing boymen,
your curved streets
are marked with shadows
and toothpick bridges.
Your creaking museums are
caked with crumbling dirt,
and there is seaweed
in your gardens.
Patrolling bermuda-shortened
tourists, fresh from Paris,
click their eye-cameras
and stare dumb-mouthed
at your blackened, sinking
churches. ■ Venice,
your rape is complete,
but I cannot weep for you.

Roman Statues

There's a magic lighting
to the streets of Rome,
where the courtyards of
even the smallest pensioners
hold a statue in their
enfolding circles.
Muscular arms of cherubic
lovers reach eagerly
for one another in the
piazzas as water splashes
around them. And down the
street, majestic horses
rear in rippling seas
while their masters flail
their weapons in the madness
of battle. In the museum,
the Dying Gaul has fallen.
His wound oozes pain that
deafens, yet there is no cry
from his lips. Only the
knowledge that death is
imminent, pride still in
his bearing, grandeur
in his suffering, but
suffering nevertheless.
Near him is the Satyr
who stands with taunting
hips, knowing his beauty
and flaunting it, laughing
his challenge.

Statues, you seek to
remind me? No! I tell you!
States of mind that I have
known - I, the taunter;
I, who die; I, who flail
my wretched weapons; I,
the imitation statuette,
enfolding in the family circle,
standing as a showpiece.
I know you all! Even the
Boxer at Rest, encrusted
in gold, who sits in abject
weariness - was it before
the fight, or after, that
defeat came? Does it matter?
Head bowed, he is beyond grief
and consolation.

Oh Rome, with your
history of mixed grandeur,
your poses are epitomized
in your statues, and I
with them. Your gentle
sun provides the lighting
and your handsome streets
the setting for me to walk
you again. Your Satyr beckons
even though in the Coliseum
I see the Dying Gaul. And now,
from somewhere, I remember
the ethereal women and their
flowing movements that graced
the reliefs I stood before
in breathless worship.
Rome, I want to know you again.

London Times

London is a place where I was lonely.

There was Picadilly's razmatazz,
the house where Ted lived before
he became leader of the country,
and the circus with American neon
lights. Super wa-wa chic played
a ringling alley down King's Road,
hips swinging, everyone kinky;
and the nine o'clock trek to the
pub where someone would always buy
you a drink, but never ask where
you lived.

I only knew seven people in London.

Shake and brake underground trains,
black and gray, with sooty posters
of sun tan lotions and airplane charters;
topsy-turvy trains sometimes spilling
when the upper lip broke into where
there were trees and stations in the sun
with little signs telling where they were.
In the city, dusty, concrete steps and
black iron railings creaked making
strange wavering noises as you filed
outside.

But I really knew four of them.

The weekly budget carefully forged
and followed, each purchase entered,
each expenditure noted, with
Miscellaneous the largest amount,
more than Entertainment, or Travel,
and certainly larger than Rent or
Cigarettes. Twelve pounds a week
it was, and included three plays
or films, newspapers and stamps.

The other three were people I saw once in a while
when they were there.

Work a day, up near noon,
mushroom soup for lunch,
fat hovis bread half-eaten,
the typewriter moved to the
bed where it sat, prim-lady,
all keys reined in, black
and old and regal, on the
skinny bed that looked
pudding plump. In the hand
sink, the dishes were cleaned
and put away, and the machine
brought back to the little
table where there was not
enough room for two piles of
paper, nor worry space for
pacing on the crowded floor.
And sounds from neighbours
playing the Doors light my
fire till the keys were punched
out at nine and I fell back,
out of breath.

After writing, breathless affletus
and a rest on the small bed; more
shrivelling for continuing to
sleep alone. Then the tired body
heaved itself to the mirror for
the patchwork job and presented
itself to the local pubs; perhaps
this time, someone would appear
with warm eyes and sincere hands.
But no, and each night the slow
walk home, silence in the streets.

I tried to go out, but it was hard to get to know
people.

Down on regal Bond Street, the budget
gasped, hand over mouth, both ghost
and conscience, it reeled back but
remained stolid for it could not buy
Bond Street: Sassoon et al could rest,
a penny here and there, but not even
a Quant scarf. Sad budget, but free
to look at everything before the descent
back to prim-lady and mushroom soup on
Longridge Road.

So in the end I did everything myself.

I toured the city somewhat, forsaking Museums for the awesome Tower; theatre and Portobello Road where there was at least life and I could walk and partake in it. Somehow I could not enter London museums; they seemed like London boutiques. I walked by the darkened Thames often, and once watched paranoid politicians argue about nothing in the House of Commons; it was duly reported in the papers next day.

I left London after five months.

Piercing Ancient Rubble

Jonathan Pearce, dressed in blue,
cruising here and there, your
blue-capped head bent over
a path that hides the ancient
coins you have come to collect.
Searching a route four thousand
years old, that once carried
myrrh and incense, you bemoan
the fates of bodies raped and
murdered by Turks and Crusaders,
skeletal remains of which appear
every few hundred metres.
You disappear behind a bush,
poking through fallen acorns
and dead olive branches, stubble
and scurrying ants and tiny purple
flowers, while sounds of shelling
and distant artillery beat their
score against the skies forming
strange drum patterns against which
you shout about burial caves
and lead me to one. Its smell is
damp and old and the bodies have
disappeared. The jaws of the empty
berths stare out to us.
Come outside! you shout, and soon
you find Gadi's pliers, now rusted
and ornery midst several scratchy
underfed bushes. Still your hands
prowl the ground as you look for
your golden shekels. I almost trip
over a fallen column and you trace
the boundaries of a Roman house
that once stood its ground.
Far away ethereal olive trees
beckon their delicate arms, and I
want to walk amongst them, but no,
I follow your crazy noises of past
history and learn of the holy tree
where Arab women once dried their
clothes to renew their fertility,
and watch you search the rubble
for pieces of silver you can't find.
Thus my afternoon with you,
when we return to the eyes of
the kibbutz empty-handed, you
belching your frustration at not
having found what so many others have,
and I silent, thinking of the
olive trees and burial caves
you brought me to.

STEVE

Forgive my arrogance, the callousness of early manhood
I did not know I could not know then
Your sallow face and its gauntness
I took for weakness, sly cunning
Your eyes were small, laughter rarely furrowed
your thin face And then later as death probed
you prepared yourself without whispering
propped up by a laconic dignity
on the adjustable hospital bed

Don't come back up again in my mind
Not this night You lie seven years dead
Your poems are forgotten
and your grave I saw by accident
this day my godmother was buried with wails
Your stone was up at the cemetery's edge,
the last line before the draining trench
A poem of yours filled half the book-shaped quartz
On the other monumental leaf: your name, Steve,
bare, with no dates—only Poet inscribed below
Who typed this last published work?
Was he stone-deaf to the chisel's almost vocal scraps?

Tonight needing a woman but alone
without the light haired one laughing
without the dark one whispering
why do I hear a cellular hum
as if that afternoon sun seething
on buzzing fluorescent stone
Eyes, what pries you
wide open like gaping mouths?

Each brow is a sunken slab
I walked into the house
back from the streets
I wanted to give away flowers
the green plants of laughter
to all those row on row of faces

Seymour Mayne

Roger

Nero, how you'd snigger...

Roger comes in, enormous
boots clump clump
clump remorselessly
to my fridge, pillaging
beer; clumps back
a huge gentle-voiced
psychopath capable of
chucking a man through a double
window. O Roger
Roger, anarchic Roger--
Roger with gigantic
beard over tweeds; Roger
with shambling decrepit
slum-mansion strewn with a rusted
Buggatti under construction
--mad necrophilic mansion
shit over by hounds--with
that mantelpiece always catching
fire over that
blazing open fire over which
he once roast a whole
pig (fish-skeletons
strewn over the floor, the
pottery furnace rumbling
ominously in the basement)--
Roger with a huge hand for any passing
crotch, Roger beating up
girls, Roger brandishing a
pistol, mercifully unloaded,
Roger, Mon Dieu, who threw

Aunt Teresa into a lake
then dived in, in bottle-
green tweeds to salvage her
glasses--
Roger who flies the jolly
Roger of the desperately
inane,
Roger whom one shuns like a
sniggering plague,
buggered
buccaneer
out of a
suffocating nightmare,

Bryan McCarthy

Frankenstein-booted Roger
going clump clump clump
to my fridge leaving a trail of
bottles and cartridges, clumping
over my papers my wife my
typewriter,
the voice incredibly
gentle and quirky with God
help us Old World
charm--

Roger: Je te salue.
You lumber through the crashing
wreckage of this city,
manifest its madness and
thin tattered lining of
western culture you
reject all you
reject you
bust yourself laughing
over ghastly anecdotes
of carnage,
deserve
more
than a snigger, the bonkered
yawn
of a civilization gone more than
barbaric, sub-brute,
mechanical like a stammering
gadget--

O Roger
once you scared me
rigid
with a stare of your dead
calm eyes, which,
for one
hallucinated second
were human.

Courtesy: Invisible City, Los Angeles.

Bryan McCarthy

No-one

Not to be Nothing he'll become
euphoric about the beauty of concrete;
decipher cryptic salvation
out of a spiel for cancerless cigarettes;
inhale hope from gasoline exhausts.
Not to be Nothing he'll tell you:

"I am Progress, consubstantial with that That
beside you gnashing invincible bulldozer teeth.
See! I barge through rock!
Down cathedrals with one karate chop!"

He is armiss, napalm: ultimate
fear. He's No-one, everywhere.

Courtesy: Invisible City

This Bloody Civilisation

This bloody
civilisation
cannot be
relied on
even

to collapse...

Landscape at Yatesbury

This is a masculine land;
Not like the Cotswolds with white-stone cottages
Nuzzling between the green breast-hills--
This land is hard
Carved from chalk in shallow concaves.

The hill, like a humped and twisted shoulder-blade
Rises under the hide of thin green turf;
Hard and humped, with a ring of trees at the summit
Curled like a cat in the sun.

The sun drips
amber; clear amber;

Slowly we drag,
Slowly along the road,
With tar sticking to boots
Then fasten the farm-gate with the rusty cable.

Then up we swelter, up, sweating, up the
Wheel-rutted white chalk track;
Rabbits bobble away and freeze behind stones;
Soft-eyed cows look at us, still munching, velvet-muzzled,
Or slouch their moving angles across the path.

And up we struggle, up;

A cloud-shadow skims across miles of plain,

And up we struggle, up.

Now, at the summit
The eye sweeps patches of green and rusty brown
To the dark woods on the hazed horizon
And rests.

Saurians
Thrashed in the plain below:
Men have lived and fought and died
On the huge, slow-changing bones of this landscape.
There below, that little eddy of life,
The ramshackle airforce camp
Will flake away like scurf, while the hills endure:
Men dying, being born,
Like renewing grass, clinging to the hill.

R.A.F., England, 1952.
Previously unpublished.

Lines written on being refused a commission
in the RAF

We leap up like dogs for scraps of success
And flee whimpering from the cracking whips of failure.
But our synthetic lust's insatiable;
We toil up dull, respectable slopes
To case the body in coatlier fibres;
Minds that should have grown like spreading trees
Are stripped to the specialized trunk;
Youth and sex and eyesight
Quickly traded for a scrap of parchment.

We learn the tricks;
Leap through the blazing hoop of war,
Commit barbaric cruelties,
And I, as I read this letter, flinch
Though thousands are in agony over the world.

Tomorrow, perhaps, I'll laugh,
For only one morsel really tempts me now,
And this the damn
Silliest of all:
To live again on posterity's lips.

RAF, 1952.
Previously unpublished.

Beast

Do not pause to admire his brain's
intricate thicket:
those contorted boughs, those ferns
--but hack! Burn!
Smoke out this raving beast!

We'll improve his mind with scalpels,
Teach him to sit with his tail curled up
And tend a machine that presses out tin cups.

1953.
Previously unpublished.

POEM

they can make you happy
but you wouldn't think so
watching them
hanging on the steady bar
rummaging through handbags
chewing gum or blankly
staring out the window

they can make you happy
and you can make them happy
when your hand is on their breast
when you stroke their lips
then they don't chew gum
or stare out the window

but the bus moves on
it never stops
it has its destination
nothing can prevent it

pretty soon
the bus is filled with hair
grey hair
varicose veins
and creaking limbs
and a nibbling subterranean terror
has total control

then they don't make anyone happy
and you can't make them happy
and suddenly it's time to get off the bus.

SOONER THAN YOU THINK

And suddenly the shiny red metal caves in and the sporty car is half way into the black Cadillac of death. Mink clitoris is mashed on cream vinyl. What a tableau of catastrophe -- two of them in the downtown section. Blood oozes out the door cracks, fingers twitch out the window in spasmodic goodbye. And everyone bursts out laughing.

The man on the ledge fifty feet up doesn't care. What a smart fellow he is, in boutique suit and colored shirt. He doesn't care what time it is as he steps out in space. His watch stopped several years ago. Now look at that awkward heap of boutique suit on the sidewalk, full of tomato pulp. Nobody could help laughing at such a droll spectacle.

Streets are full of sirens communicating their universal language of panic and terror. Apartment windows are full of eyes glinting red from the patrol car's flashing beacon. It is all so terribly amusing.

Silver rain has begun to fall luminously between clapping hands and very soon we shall fall asleep with silly giggles. City stop lights will blink red/amber/green, on and on until the ungoverned generators, untendered, speed up and burst in a shriek of unlubricated bearings. Flakes of silver rain will turn and glint in a vapid breeze on sidewalks stained with bubblegum and bottle tops.

Supermarkets all over town will be swept over by electronic eye of closed-circuit tv and between signs for Sales and Reductions no eyes will see the rotting sides of beef, bursting cans of cat food, moulding breakfast foods. Nor will the marauding rat that stalks through festering melons go accosted as he opens shop for antique ant.

What will happen to gay buntings of plastic waving over gasoline stations, highways stitching together the landscapes of the world, pop records, films, love letters, mini-dresses, popcorn and coca-cola ads.

What will happen to thinking, insight and poetry. And what will happen to lovely cloudscapes. Will they momentarily form the shape of a beatific smile of God and will the wind whisper in words that ring through the corridors of earth: God damn you man. God damn you FUCKING man.

Alan Pearson

WAITING

I'm waiting
for the footfalls of a lover
to come
& make the threads of loneliness
form a rope long enough
to hang themselves.

Well not really waiting perhaps hoping.
I'm having a Saturday afternoon
cafe au lait
in the Museum
after growing dizzy in the blue
of Dufy's Mediterranean.
I'm sipping and skimming
over painted seas
like a toy glider.

And suddenly I can face life
falling apart
like an equation
in the head of a dunce.
Today I'm walking through life
like it's Central Station.
I've bought a magazine
thrown away my timetable
& stopped looking for destinations.
Why not, I'm here.

Yes, aging dancers reel from sight
leases are running out
sleek yachts leave the harbor
& trains pass through gorges
without me but

oh hell what lovely lethal savoriness
in trivialities & narcotic pleasures
in these hours perhaps years
of solitary gliding
while I wait for life to form
like a good question

behind the question mark.

Alan Pearson

LITTLE MANTIS

Little mantis on the wall,
Ain't you got no home at all ?
No pappa ? No mamma ?
But you do.

If your father had practised sublimation
Instead of being weak for a sensation,
There'd still be a "him",
But no "you".

Little mantis, shaky feet,
Can't you see the males are beat ?
With smug smile on her choppers, your mother sits,
Dreaming of new husbands to eat.

Dave Pinson
Courtesy: The Canadian Forum

LITTLE BLACK WIDOW

'Mamma, why did you eat daddy?'
The little black spider said,
'Didn't he provide for you
And keep your family well fed?

'Mamma, did he copy humans
With his off-season affairs?'
Baby's tone was serious
With four pairs of eyes full of tears.

'Mamma, if you're called Black Widow,
Then what do they call the men?
Surely not Black Widower,
'Cause daddy is now a has-been.

'Mamma, why did you eat daddy?'
The little black spider said,
'Could it be that my daddy
Is surely much better off dead?'

Dave Pinson
Courtesy: the fiddlehead

VENDETTA

Skinny and Blackie were enemies,
 Their families had been for years
 Carrying on the vendetta
 Begun by their ancient forebears.

Skinny sent Blackie a message,
 Said, "Will you agree to a truce?
 I've got a perfect solution
 For keeping our necks from the noose."

Blackie relayed his complaisance,
 They met in a dark, quiet wood,
 Said Skinny, "I heard in our families
 That marriages don't turn out good.

"First, they're mostly incestuous,
 Which I don't consider nice,
 And second, the most important,
 The sex-triggered 'sacrifice'.

"I don't advocate matriarchy,
 So why don't we run away
 And leave our people their fending
 While we take a holiday?"

They left in the stillness of moonlight,
 But Skinny was quickly impaled
 (Such is the fate of a mantis)
 By a female scorpion's tail.

Blackie, the rebel Black Widow,
 Frightened by this, made his break,
 But dashed in the wet, purple cavern
 Of a female rattlesnake.

The world is full of vendettas,
 But every phylum was damned
 Since the top-level meeting in Eden
 And its keynote, "Cherchez la femme".

Dave Pinson

cousin Jean Louis

Cousin Jean Louis at twelve
was still unpenetrable-- colors numbers
names of streets and so forth, he forget
always did forget
though his mother kept drilling
'What color the frig Jean, the table, the dress?'

In my mother's kitchen, in front of strangers
he was being humiliated and knew
it, though not much more 'Jean, why'd you flunk
school again?' Pneumonia, they said at the orphanage
after he'd been adopted,
once affected him for life.

At seven his brother could already outwit him
and answered the questions
in his place, laughing 'Jean's retarded!'
while Jean fondled a shirt button on the edge
of the tablecloth, his eyes
were small fish behind a glass, turning away.

Sometimes it stopped, talk was directed elsewhere
than Jean, sometimes; at moments
it was silent almost, with water in the kettle boiling
and atop the refrigerator was a yellow wire
cage, shape of a beehive, we kept birds in-- bird
sound, and my cousin repeating 'Don't know, don't.'

- -

A short biographical note:

I was born in Montreal, 1951, of French & English parents.
I have been writing for about four years; & what I've
learned is that poetry (mine or anyone else's) is useless
unless it's relative to my life and to the lives of other
people. I wish to create a poetry through which I would
become a bit more human, and everyone else would too.

My first book of poems, touchings, was published last
winter by the Fiddlehead Press.

October fourth, 1971
Marc Flourde

DAVID READ

CANDLES IN THE DARKNESS

Why do you smile?
I hate candles in the darkness ...

Exploration cannot drain mountainous desires dry,
even at sixteen - no matter how hard we tried
ice still formed on walled cities of flesh, frightened
by responsibilities. Now unable to rest
will memory allow you with child, husband at your side
to face a platonic friendship with a sense of pride?

Fragrance of opium stimulates the air ...
emerald dust falls from imaginary chandeliers ...
we know nothing about wounds, only sometimes
lust seems erased by age.

Why do you smile?
I hate candles in the darkness ...

ROUND - SMOOTH & STERILE

Yesterday I killed my ability to hear -
by overbearing sound ...

Today I killed my ability to taste -
by over-indulgence ...

Tomorrow I'll kill my ability to see -
by closing my eyes ...

Then I'll be without
sound, taste and sight -

A perfect moon

I'll be round,
smooth & sterile -

even the dance

what happens here?
the body flows
like a tear. each move
is perfect.

but why?

(do trees
make secrets?
but flesh does);

spoken; the hand moves
in fearful mime

of its silence...

but why?

for space
is everywhere

the mood
of our body.

for the body
alone
is an epic.

for even the
dance
dreams us

David Rosenfield

For My Grandmother Dying

she forbids us her pain
but what I remember
what I can't forget
is not this
is only the pain
is not the forbidding
tells us to go
I know she does
but not this I remember
and most days
she can't speak
it must
it hurts too much
and what hope
for no end to pain
no sacred place
to hold to
no sacred place
but this
but still forbids us pain
and at times
as tho a child again
or we wondered
her hands would move
purposeful
almost
as if to music
but none we heard
and unseeing
the patterns formed there
we thought
she could be sewing
so often
as once she did
and strong as she was
then
to make a sacred place
she remembers
it was first so hard
never to owe
to keep strong
and almost alone
in her pride
my mother tells me
how fierce she was
as a woman
but so hard for me
to know this
now
her joy in me
the first grandchild
now empty
so empty seeing her

thinking this
I have consumed her
the years have
it's just too much
her eyes are vacant
like stones
her cheeks so drawn
her feet all covered with sores
look purple
as if with rust
she sits so still
in her pain
we call to her
we place our hands
on her hand
I lean to kiss her
I feel so empty
of grief
I fill my mind
like a sieve
for no image fits
not one
I think of saints kissing lepers
one withered arm rests
taped round a splint
in a maze of wires
I watch the bottles
she feeds from

David Rosenfield
28/9/71

TO THE JOBLESS

Do you know
my friends
the sacred cow
common or garden variety

the one we see in banks
in offices
in confessionals
in out-patient clinics
and etc.,
And finally universities

The big-eyed cow
that kicks you
in the back
When you are distracted.

The one who knocks you down
because you are caught
on her horns
and you have no choice
but to live or die.

You know, I say,
friends,
this tyrant cow

A cow who chews the cud
of our troubles

the sacred cow
of the breadless worker

the cow that unhappily
is not sad like other cows
more like a piranha!

manuel betanzos santos

Ronald Shoofler A Bunch of Poems

THE FAMILIAL HE

Maybe divorced from the daily routine
and with time a bit more elastic
he could find the home he had in mind
in a windmill of legs...

He no longer talked to himself,
having forgot the tongue.

"I," he said, reciting numbers as the proof.
Only Cordelia laughed, so he cut her off,
staining his papers with blood--
"I," he cried...

RECOGNITION OF SHOCK

EINSTEIN

XIX century proved
its dangerous to race beams of light.
You come upon obstacles
suddenly.

He spelled the half-life
of the political mind,
played the gentleman & scholar
and left us beams of light to race.

I stoned my muse
and now I'm writing letters to myself
addressed to "Occupant."

I always knew Muses
aren't supposed to be someone you know,
someone whose name you
know like your own.

My heart fell to pieces and I felt
no pain.

TAKING STOCK #2

a different person
wrote that. Someone standing
at the entrance to a dream
. dead-end

I got your letter
clear as the lines on my hand

thinking cannon-fodder
from a juster world



I am in you

Ronald Shooter
A Bunch of Poems

THE COMMON TOUCH

He was born with a silver foot in his mouth.

He invested in depressions
and plagues. His pollution dividends
made the front pages of all the dailies
and when he died they cremated him
and spread his ashes on other people's rugs.

A DIFFERENT PULSE HE WANTS OR FEARS TO HEAR

To talk as though he knew what made him tick
and to watch for the voices that say exactly...

To make up and face the facts
and smile, and smile and be a villain
with etiquette garrotte
and charitable thought:
to talk as though he knew what made him tick.

THREATENED BY THE PRESENCE OF BEARS

I
want to be someplace
safer than this world.

I want a Medieval cosmos
ten miles wide
with all the dragons outside.

INDULGE ONLY A PASSION FOR NEATNESS

WHEELING SHEILA TO THE ROAD

The house is light
I pass from light to light ...

coiled strikes at the drapes,
digs between the picture and the wall,
drops like a stone into the deepest pot,
absorbs the sun; whose outer world turns black
with coldness and neglect.
Not a stone clings to its brother
on this darkest afternoon

only where Sheila is in light.

The stroller set on the furthest step
Sheila is across the door.
I see the house devour itself;
the chimney swings in huffs of motion;
lawn curls over the walls.

Now neither light nor light can lead

not a lizard turns in the world
the crow is down
its wings beaten under the wheels
- forcing over the ruts
we come to the outer road.

A leaf awakens her. Skins drum against her eyes;
fire whistles the trunk
until animal and rook quiver in this agony of light.
Eye and mind command
the tree that burns forever.

(I could tell you Sheila
of how sap springs the buds,
the rivers that bind each leaf
to cuts of water underground;
how the air rising against its brother
rakes the tree in passing)

but you are turned around
and in your passing tree curls into pod
roots split from their ground
- tree animal and stone shrink upon themselves
 masked like the window from my sight.

Over the hill the dog is racing toward us,
stone and lizard smoking in his path.
His yelps riddle the hill
throw burr and sod upon us as I crouch in terror

(shall I tell you why the dog is barking:
of the rope that binds him to sixty feet of wall
of the man who holds the wall
halfway to his death
and dog must follow?)

but you have drawn a car beyond us on the road
and dog and wall catapult in light
ticking to a distant ember.
The afternoon draws closer still.

Now a plane knuckles your ear
and each in turn
tree plane dog upon his gun
flame as you touch the soft places in your head.

I forget the names of oceans
the book of growing things
 lost in an agony of knowing
I am salt earth burns forever.

Wheeling Sheila up the road
I turn from the face of the giver
and being wheeled turn again
into first light
between black house/dark river.

Glen Siebrasse

two poems by Nancy Stegmayer

amour -
an
our

(ram)

murmur
on.

sunset

white
water lilies
whirled
through
the blue light
down
to our quietness
in the brown grass

the breeze
blew
petal pictures
on our backs
while the sun
calmly circled
before our eyes

notre dame cathedral, or, donations for the souls in purgatory

ice-breath
magnificent

mazed arches
dazzling gilt

under
stings of
reddened
light
candles flutter gently

while
fat blue americans
shuffle
flash-bulb popping
beneath
contorted frescos
gawking
double-chinned

as
my eye-whites
glazed
to salt
stiffen

at
the tour-guide's
litany
hissing
from
the
darkened corners

- nancy stegmayer

IN GULDENSTERN COUNTY

P VAN TOCHEN

1 Name: Slipped Beat

in guldensstern county
where there's hardly any wind
to go by
you can smell the poem in a thing
for miles- when wind
wins. Wins,
hands down, right out of nowhere, given
good grass out front,
bad brush behind.
Even so,
not counting wind in the pines,
wind in the brakesalems,
there's hardly
any to go by-
go by, put arms around, smoke on, ride off,
laugh across, or
bullshit about- just miles
& miles to crash
& keep crashing through.
Given go,
guts,
reach,
even say-go,
wind puts auk eyes all around you.
Call it: wawa.

2 Auk & Verb

Wawa,
sound of wind.
Good grass out front,
bad brush behind.
Try feeling at home, and the loon reminds you
smack in the gut (boatmiles off)
of travelling way out alone.
Wawa,
ice-fisher,
jab jab, pine all around.
Try and beat it,
rock it, and
wawa!
auk eyes
unload you, yank you out,
rip all the winterizing right off,
rock you into a black-out
from your headlights to your spine.
Wawa,
gun it blue,
and it thumbs you into bad bush,
rolls a tongue of frozen ground out.
Wawa,
good grass out front,
bad bush behind.

3 Push/Pull

Say wawa sleds your knees on staggered track,
drives them down
like plows.
Give it
push/pull, give it pride,
blush on like a tube.
Right off
wawa slaps a skin on you:
shak'nbake,
butterfly eggspit, cowsep, cobweb, gumswgrass.
Just to mash your knuckles,
rush them
like windblown spuds.
Wawa,
the moguls scramble, your windshield
on fire, screens
of beaver teeth.
Wawa,
drops down the cougar's light,
visits your laugh off,
hums on your jaw
like a jam sandwich slapped on a pound of bees.
Wawa,
wasp's tar,
ropes you in, scabs
you, gives you bark back.
Wawa,
the way people grow
the way the wind leans them- blows them
like a blues harp.

Wawa,
the way people grow one way, pulling
in another. Both ways
:the way the wind leans them.
Wawa,
loading and unloading-
a way of growing. Better give it power.

4 Phrase of Queen's lace

So much to trip out on.... Crazy
dripfern, chinook, tag-a-lag, blockweed, tanager:
some of the honkiest names-
not counting pine, granite, and deerflies.
And wouldn't it suck your
eyes out to
know
there's enough trackpoles to carry
all the Queen's lace
coast to coast
and still measure time by. Plus
goose static
up
in Fudge Attic
to phase out a Dowline: make it
light up
on the world's most wanted poster space-
guns backfiring
and radar caught in the Queen's fuddy lace.

Nothing to get hung up about...

5 Pick & Slobber: Substantive Suction

Given all this handy bosher space
full of elbow holes
and 'taiga'
you'd think wind would make it here.
Rap up a storm,
go all out like a poem, get laid
like track; start a
beep, blough, gloovel, vroopazang
or something...
No way.

like the man from up north said,
"for all the mileage
bookfull
of the raunchiest ferns, etc.
there's all that
skunkway
the biggest fenders can't defend you from.
And it films
just like one big Buster Keaton smile and back."
Wawa,
the man meant. Back
through cowpiased stretches, hamburger
on hotdog town,
the wide open spitting back insect custard
(na na da ti-ga, in Objewan)
& all glory
in between free advertising
going to the backbenchers- for whipping up
moose slobber.

Enough to humidify parliament forever.
All in one drive, given slobber trays.

6 Long & Short Sounds: Heavy Trucking

Not counting
wind in snow storms
or panty raids
deep up in snow's
northernest
pantries (so full of ice &
pure
gray lace)
watch out.

Wind's a thing
carries all the bluster
in guildenstern cojunct county.

Flexes the shoulderhigh principle,
putties the chips,
and breaks your rocks.

Takes home the fat,
day after bleary day.

I'm not talking of pay.
I'm talking of wind.

Wind,
you know him.
Roadsoud, trim as bacon,
deodorizing
as a bomb, full of accuracy
like paperweights:

the easy uncle of toadhall.

Buyer, canner, buster
mad-a-stick maker.

A punch & let-me-go holler
in every line of phony sound. Animal
lie of found.
Picked up
from miles around.
Dives down, out of sight,
surfacing in
talk of
beaver, narwhal, & heavy trucking.

7 Gory Story: Jonah Persona

Hiway's got him going, button's got him jammed.
Bojo Harang.

■ Catch him
coming through the sticky pines,
all blugsy 'n bulgy,
schoolboyish-
with tamarack under his arms, ketchup on his fly-
working over on greased ball bearings,
wiping
the brocolli of oilsoot
all over the Queen's footy lace.
And riggin' dat slapstuff-
catch'm sometime.

■ Pause for Prose: Articles Failing

North's what grants him leave to, stuff
go do it. Things,
his's.
Gottabee.

Drag a radar, bag a
mallard,
elbow in .
on valence grooming: just
jeeps up
500 turkeys on each 10 ton hubcap-
for traction, gobble gobble....

9 Jassom'n Pehzaz: Pike Tone

As him go fo goofy babes, buff
jobs, strapping
straw saunabone blondies- all goopy
on blue saddlesoap
or quicky
instant thing. Rinse
the streakline from all his bug-eyes.

Watch'm sometime, glubby
for 'em.
Watch'm pack a tan & buick smile.

Alpha, beta, betcha dollar
balls that broad in his Nehru collar.

Guppy's tricks, all. Yessirreebob.

Came here as sound,
stayed on.
Big wind only.

In guildenstern county you can smell the lie
for miles.
In rosenrantz, you can buy it.

Gertrude Katz

COMPATRIOTISM

It must be the miles of nude landscape
that cause Canadian writers
embarrassment when writing
love of country,

like dwarfs having an affair
with an amazon -
image: mouse screwing a moose
miles between kissing her in the Atlantic
and an orgasm in the Pacific.

My Canada is most beautiful
when she lifts her green skirts,
exposes a white frigid bottom
testing the strength of a hearty nation -
boys escaping south or provincial
for bonfires.

My loving country men: be of stout heart.
I've bought thermo underwear for the critics
and the U.S. is sending up
an obsolete defrosting device.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE POETRY IN THIS ISSUE

Very Good

Avi Boxer	Familial Roulette	Page 2
Ron Everson	Danse Russe (despite technical faults)	11
Raymond Fraser	Herman on a Winter Day	14
Artie Gold	Untitled Poem	18
Gertrude Katz	Letter to My Daughter	30
Alan Pearson	Waiting (technically faulty)	49

Good

Raymond Fraser	Survival Kit Instructions, According to Freud..., The Stars Decide, The Well Hung Man	13, 15, 15
Artie Gold	Untitled	20
Seymour Mayne	Steve / Succeeds despite posing and rhetoric)	41
Alan Pearson	Poem	47
Marc Plourde	Cousin Jean-Louis	52
David Read	Candles in the Darkness, Round--Smooth & Sterile	53
Gertrude Katz	Compatriotism	67

Worth Reading

Avi Boxer	Noumenal Love (Too far from real emotion to merit 'good')	6
	Haiku Dyad & Haiku Triad	7
Louis Dudek	Continuum (Thoughts in Transit)	9
Ron Everson	In a church aisle (or Good)	12
Trevor Goodger-Hill	One Body, Aging, Out of Square	21
	Boxes What Comes? (Genuine content let down by bad technique)	23
Marlo Gross	When the Cock Crows (the poets maudit tradition, passé but well written)	26
Carol Leckner	London Times	37
Alan Pearson	Sooner Than You Think	48
David Rosenfield	For My Grandmother Dying (22 poor lines, then the poem gathers strength)	55
Manuel Betanzos Santos	To the Jobless (Starts well but fumbles the climax)	56
Renald Shoeffler	Threatened by the Presence of Bears	58
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Poems I do not understand

Michael Gnarowski	In anticipation of the repeal of the War Measures Act, April 1971	16
David Rosenfield	Even the Dance	54
Glen Siebrasse	Wheeling Sheila To The Road	59
P. Van Toorn	In Guildenstern County	63

I shall not attempt to assess my own work, pp 42-46

The remaining poems seem to me to be mediocre or bad. However, I invite the reader to look them over and draw his own conclusions.

Bryan McCarthy

1633 de Maisonneuve #4
Montreal 108
Quebec

December 15, 1971

Dear Bryan,

On receiving your letter postmarked December 13, 1971, I was somewhat surprised by its content; 'surprised' is perhaps not the fitting adjective. The statements therein do not seem to be in keeping with the general policy of criticism of the magazine. To say the least, it appears to be rather incongruous that the managing editor of a "free poets" magazine should compile a list categorising poets who may not wish to be categorised, let alone without substantiating comments.

Your privilege, as managing editor, to manufacture said unsolicited categories is questionable. Your choice for each category (very good, good, etc.) is even more bewildering. Arbitrarily, I chose "Letter to My Daughter" from the 'very good' poems and tried to reconcile it with your judgment. The task was not an easy one: "my honey-tangle-haired teen" seems more likely to be found in a Harlequin Romance than anywhere else, not to mention "like a dumb cow chewing her cud" etc. The poem would stand more readily as prose than it does in this form, for it conveys no real poetical essence. Conversely, you have listed "Compatriotism" by the same author under the 'good' epithet; poetically speaking it is a far better 'sculpted' poem than the former, and a 'very good' one, with its vivid similes.

Your category of 'worth reading' is a completely condescending one, and totally fatuous. Any poem is worth reading if only in the context of permitting the reader to decide if he personally sees merit, sensitivity or some technical skill therein.

I find your section on 'Poems I do not understand' embarrassing and unnecessary. Unfortunately, if you do not comprehend said poems, that is your personal tragedy, and not to be inflicted on the other members without some manner of explication. Glen Siebrasse's poem does demand a certain amount of imagination on the reader's part, but flows extremely well with some exceptional images: his use of light and dark, "now a plane knuckles your ear" and others.

In summary then, the tone of your notice is patronising, pompous, unjustified, and even fucking obnoxious, especially:

"The remaining poems seem to me to be mediocre or bad. However I invite the reader to look them over and draw his own conclusions".

It is rather magnanimous of you to cordially allow anyone (or should I say 'invite' anyone) to have his own opinions now that your unfounded ones have detonated beneath our eyeballs. I suggest that, in future, you keep your undesired, non sequiter, dictatorial comments to yourself, or pay for them, substantiate them, and have them printed in the BOOSTER AND BLASTER.

Best wishes,

Nancy Stegmayer



cc: Gertrude Katz
Glen Siebrasse

I have just read Bryan McCarthy's assessment of the poetry in this first issue, and while I am in general agreement with him I would like, for 50¢, to elevate Alan Pearson's "Sooner than you think" from worth reading to good and if the word "fucking" were removed from the last line I would call it very good. I'm not against fucking, either the word or the act, but it kind of sticks out like a sore thumb down there and though I appreciate the outburst, it strikes me as distractive and superfluously emphatic (unless he means things are in such bad shape because of all the fucking going on, children production, which I suppose gets at the root of things; or in the sense of fucking up the works, but that's already clear; and anyway, you wouldn't expect the wind to use such terrible language, I mean most winds are more couth than that, it's what gets caught up in them that's bad). In any case, I enjoyed the poems very much, it's vivid. I think it's a mistake, too, that Dave Pinson is not given a nod. There's a Lewis Carroll quality to his poems that I like. He's probably the only one around writing poetry of that sort, at least that I know of. I enjoyed reading them. I am handicapped against placing Bryan McCarthy's poems since I've just read a favorable piece he wrote on a poem of mine in this issue. I would be believed if I gave him a low mark -- but mistrusted if I rated him high. My problem is that I like the poems. So I'll leave it at that. I would not want people mistrusting me; it's bad enough me being suspicious of everyone else. There are some other minor disagreements, like a change from worth reading to good or vice versa, but the difference in estimation is not that great to bear mentioning. (P.S. I would advance T. Goodger-Hill). - Raymond Fraser

DAVID READ.

ROUND-SMOOTHER-STERILE,

Page 53.

Looked at, but cannot be seen-
That is called Invisible.
Listened to, but cannot be heard-
That is called Inaudible.
Grasped at, but cannot be touched-
That is called Intangible.
These three elude all our inquiries
And hence blend and become One.

Not by its rising, is there light,
Nor by its sinking, is there darkness.
Unceasing, continuous,
It cannot be defined,
And reverts again to the realm of nothingness.

That is why it is called the Form of the Formless
The Image of Nothingness.
That is why it is called the Elusive;
Meet it and you do not see its face;
Follow it and you do not see its back.

MARIO GROSS

Is Everson being deliberately clumsy, in the first stanza, to avoid slick effect, or is he blundering? If the former, I question his strategy. The first line suggests that the friend is actually waving something. The stanza as a whole however, indicates that sheets of music are not being waved, but are tacked or scotch-taped to the wall--this being a somewhat rambunctious gesture, a metaphorical flourish. Surely this simple idea could have been expressed more directly.

From the second stanza on, the poem improves. To understand it completely, one needs to know that it's about a poet. He inhabits a large house where he communes with two dead geniuses, Mozart and Brahms. The image of the tall man attempting to play the violin 'in an ecstasy of quiet squalls' is effective, and conveys pathos. Two twists follow: Firstly, the happy genius doesn't read his musical masters correctly. This is turned into a compliment in the last two lines.

The central idea is firmly grasped, compassionately presented, and haunts the mind. A basically cheerful spirit has become turned away from his own time and existence and plays solitary music in a large house of the imagination, communing with the great dead.

Bryan McCarthy

ARTIE GOLD, UNTITLED POEM, PAGE 18

In this poem, Gold executes a sustained jig on a tightrope stretched between sense and nonsense. There's enough sense behind the jazz-like verbal improvisation to prevent the words from flying away altogether into the void. The sustained tone and rhythm is remarkable. The da da's and beeps come off. The poem has gusto, wit, and a 20th Century diction.

I don't share Gold's enthusiasm for bp Nichol, the subject of the poem. The original Dadaists and Surrealists rebelled against, among other things, an oppressive rationality which they sensed to be out of touch with what was going on in the world: and it still seems to me that anyone who is 'in touch' today must have a sense of the crazy, the demonic. However, today the dadaist stunt is no longer liberating. The dadaist artefact has become a stolid commodity, no more liberating than the self-filling ice cube tray, or dietetic dogfood. Nonsense is the oppressor today: the fake reasoning of the advertisements, the vapid controversy of the TV panel, the desiccated spiel of academics. Anyone who, today, can rub two sentences together and make genuine sense is a Castro of the mind. Incidentally, Breton, Duchamp, et al, could write impeccably Cartesian prose.

But poetry is an unruly, unpredictable art. Artie Gold has made a fine poem out of unpromising materials.

Bryan McCarthy

This is a poem of depth, perhaps the best in this issue. It may appear to be artlessly written, but this appearance is deceptive. Notice how the details of dress establish Herman as a physical presence. The details are not randomly kodakked; they gel. Notice the not juste of 'lumped' in line 9, with its suggestion of something lumpish or obtuse. Notice also that we can interpret "Moke? Moke?" in line 12 because in the opening line we were told of Herman's intention of bumming a cigarette. I mention these details because the craftsmanship is, as it should be, unobtrusive.

The poem portrays an act of inhumanity perpetrated by purportedly normal people upon a mentally defective person. They make him 'perform' in return for a cigarette. They manipulate him--who knows from what impulse--to alleviate boredom perhaps. The twist in the poem is that Herman, the defective, unlike Marty and his customers, senses that something evil has been done and runs out of the store. The crab-image works despite the oddity of a crab scuttling through snow: it embodies the sub-human atmosphere of the store as well as suggesting that Herman has been reduced to something less than human.

Fraser makes one feel the horror of the violation he describes without moralizing or indulging in rhetoric. The world portrayed, incidentally, is still one in which an inhuman act can register as such. Sub-human it may be, but it is not sub-brute "like a stammering gadget" to quote a distinguished Bard. The setting is a store in a small town in the Maritimes--Chatham, Fraser tells me. In such 'backward' places some things of human value may be conserved, such as fresh air and courtesy, which have long been lost in the city where the Transaction is Absolute and a manipulative orientation taken for granted.

This poem embodies qualities which should be noted by poets who imagine that writing poetry is a matter of producing something with slick verbal surface and marketing it. It has subject matter of real concern to the poet himself, and, I imagine, to most sane readers, expressed in a way which makes the reader feel, puts him in touch with himself.

The poet today works in the face of discouragements: prattlings that in the age of the media poetry is obsolescent, for example, and the mindless peddling of words without nutritional value as poetry. A poem like HERMAN ON A WINTER DAY reminds one that, after all, poetry is worth while.

Bryan McCarthy

The theme of this poem emerges sluggishly. The last three lines of stanza 1 give us a lifeless conceit which does not really connect, in terms of the logic of imagery, with a 'footfall'. Notice however that the function of the lover is purely to relieve the poet's loneliness. If the lover has a real existence in his own right, it is not insisted on.

In stanza 2, Pearson moves closer to his subject. He's in a museum, at a loose end, sipping coffee, dreaming of Raoul Dufy's Mediterranean. The choice of Dufy is significant, Dufy being a painter who creates a sort of paradise out of French ports and holiday resorts. He's a purely aesthetic painter who presents a life of blue sea, sun, beach-play--a life without moral centre, passion, pain, or the agony of choosing. A paradise certainly, but an infantile one, offering at best, a rest-cure for the jaded spirit. But a holiday is meaningful only in relation to a life of real commitment--the existence of which is not hinted at in these paintings.

Nevertheless the sheer charm of the vision temporarily reinforces the poet. He can confront the Central Station of existence with a certain nonchalance. He's not worried about destinations. He has his magazine (Playboy?), and perhaps he'll jump on the next train at random (getting off at the next station) or perhaps, as line 25 suggests, he'll just hang around the station.

The last two stanzas react against this position. Ironically he acknowledges the 'lethal savouriness' of his uncommitted existence, which he likens to 'gliding' (cf. the toy glider image, stanza two). The ache of emptiness is the real emotional content of the poem, the poignancy of the poet's situation being in the fact that, because of exhaustion or bafflement, he can only wait for "...life to form/ like a good question/ behind the question mark."

This is a sad poem of self-revelation, containing elements of self-disgust, and a brave one. In a society in which 'busy' people are rushing spasmodically to get their wares--any wares, useful or useless, including incidentally tons of poetic garbage--to market, the sluggish, groping honesty of this poem of near hopeless self-disgust, comes, paradoxically, as a tonic. A poem for grown-ups.

Bryan McCarthy

God I like your poem. You relate the sensation of the north country, of bring in it, of its being, so well I am there.

First reading, I was thrown by several similarities between your poem and one of mine, LONDON TIMES, that appears in this issue on page 35. First, I detected between us a similar use of words; and a similar desire to convey the sensation of a place, though yours is an account of the sensation of being in the north country, while mine is an account of a place (London) seen through my eyes and voice. A difference. My style is more journalistic, yet your poem is in the sense that I know more about the north country than you (probably) do about London.

Your "wawa" is the refrain-like wind coming back, coming back; mine after the wawa pedal used in rock music to stretch the sound of the electric lead guitar. Your wawa is the rush of wind-sound that lies side by side with silence in the north, mine the electric neon that fills the silence of the screeching city. Both wawa's.

In stanza three, you write "shake'nake/butterfly eggsplit", which rhythmically corresponds to the "shake and brake, underground trains" of my LONDON TIMES; in your stanza four "not counting pine, granite, and deerflies" is a similar sort of construction to my budget discussion of LONDON TIMES, stanza three.

Though I am speaking of London and you of Canada, you call Canada "Guldenstern county", a reference to England (and our status thereof?) - which led me to believe at first that you too were writing about the Queen's land.

I was struck by these things, of two strangers appearing in the same issue proceeding in similar yet different ways, but more than that, I identified very strongly with your use of words in general, or perhaps more specifically, as demonstrated IN GULDENSTERN COUNTY. I admire very much the breadth and subtlety of your images, the way they work to produce a whole, and also the fact that there are no tricks, just words creating a poem, the honest, and hardest, way.

CAROL H. LECKNER

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CAROL H. LECKNER. Born Montreal, 1946. Been writing since early teens, through high school and university. Have been published journalistically (The Gazette, Weekend Magazine); researched "Hourglass" first season (then "7 on 6"). Travelled Europe and Israel for two years; worked at Saidye Bronfman Centre Theatre as Production Secretary for a year-and-a-half. Presently unemployed but taking in typing to support myself, and working on a second novel (fiction), and a collection of poems. This marks the first time my poems have been published...

as this is my first emergence from the poetical closet i feel
reluctantly compelled to disrobe my person, as it were. have
been wandering through the Sir George Williams Institute for
the mentally handicapped for three years now (which places me
somewhere between 15 and 51 i'm not exactly sure) trying to
adjust to "life" (my first mistake) and not quite succeeding
(well...). other than the above i devote the rest of my time to
writing, my cats, exterminating cockroaches, and crawling up
my apartment stairs at approximately (give or take a half-hour)
2 (two) a.m.....Nancy Stegmayer



2021